

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling operations on an object, comprising the acts of:

5 providing a server maintaining at least one object, wherein the object is
capable of existing in one state selected from a set of states;

 maintaining the set of states associated with said object and state transitions
for indicating valid transitions among states in the set of states and maintaining an
indication of a current state of said object wherein said current state is a state selected
10 from said set of states;

 receiving a request for said object from a second computer; and

 providing said object, an indication of said current state, and an indication of
selected state transitions based on said current state to said second computer whereby
the second computer may only perform the state transitions based on said selected
15 state transitions.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the object comprises a document.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected state transitions are filtered based on
20 the permissions granted to the requestor.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected states transitions are transmitted as operations that may be performed upon the object.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the server determines the names of the operations
5 in accordance with a local language of the requestor.

6. The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the act of receiving a request to transition the object to another state wherein the another state is one of the selected state transitions.

7. The method as recited in claim 6 further comprising the act of changing the state of the object to the another state.

8. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the selected states are maintained in a
15 table of states and associated valid state transitions that are associated with the object.

9. A computer-readable medium bearing computer executable instructions capable of carrying out the acts recited in claim 1.

20 10. An object management system, comprising:
a data structure for at least one object in a set of objects in said object management

system, comprising for said at least one object a set of states in which said object may be maintained, a set of transitions between said states, and a current state;

computer-readable server instructions that receive requests from a client for said object and retrieve from said data structure at least a subset of transitions between states,

5 where said subset of transitions is based upon transitions out of the current state; and

computer-readable server instructions that return to said client an indication of at least the subset of transitions between states.

11. The object management system as recited in claim 10 further comprising
10 computer-readable server instructions capable of changing the data structure to change the current state of the at least one object to a selected state of the states in the set of states where the selected state is based on a transition between states contained in the subset of transitions returned to the client.

12. The object management system as recited in claim 10 wherein the objects
15 comprises documents.

13. The object management system as recited in claim 10 wherein the recited computer-readable instructions reside on a server accessible by way of a network.

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14. The object management system as recited in claim 13 wherein the network

comprises an Internet.

15. The object management system as recited in claim 10 further comprising a set of computer-readable instructions residing on a client, said computer-readable instructions
5 requesting from said computer-readable server instructions a subset of state transitions for the at least one object, receiving in return the subset of state transitions, and presenting a user with operations capable of being performed on said object where the operations are based on the subset of state transitions.

10 16. The system of claim 10 wherein the indication of the subset states transitions are transmitted as operations that may be performed upon the object.

15 17. The system of claim 16 wherein the indication of the operations are presented in accordance with a local language of the requestor.

18. The system as recited in claim 10 wherein the set of states are maintained in a table of states and associated valid state transitions that are associated with the object.

20 19. A method of interacting with an object management system, comprising:
providing a indication of a plurality objects within the object management system;
inputting a request to operate upon a selected one of the plurality of objects within the

object management system;

transmitting the request to a server that maintains a data structure for the selected
object comprising a set of states in which the object may exist, a set of transitions between
said states, and a current object state, whereby the server provides an indication of a subset of
5 transitions between states, where said subset of transitions is based upon transitions out of the
current object state; and

providing an indication of operations that may be performed upon said object where
said operations are based upon the subset of transitions provided by the server.

10 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the object is a document.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the operations comprise document check-out
operations.

15 22. The method of claim 19 wherein the act of transmitting occurs of a computer
network.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the network comprises an Internet.